



# United States Department of the Interior

## FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

*Eastern Washington Ecological Services Field Office*

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August 22, 2001

Peter F. Poolman  
Chief, Environmental Compliance Branch  
Walla Walla District, Corps of Engineers  
201 N. Third Ave.  
Walla Walla, WA 99362-1876

RE: Dredged Material Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement  
for the McNary Reservoir and Lower Snake River Reservoirs  
FWS Reference: 01-I-E0423

Dear Mr. Poolman:

This is in regards to your letter of June 27, 2001, which we received in our office on July 3, 2001, regarding the Biological Assessment (BA) for the Dredged Material Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement for the McNary Reservoir and Lower Snake River Reservoirs. This letter supplements our concurrence letter on the proposed dredging activities dated July 27, 2001. The proposed project includes a 20-year dredging concept plan along with specific dredging activities proposed for 2002-2003. The Corps of Engineers (Corps) plans to consult on future proposed activities that would take place over five-year time periods, with the next consultation covering the time period 2004-2009.

In our July 27, 2001, letter, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) concurred with your determinations that the Corps' proposed activities for 2002-2003 "may affect, but are not likely to adversely affect" bald eagles, Ute ladies'-tresses, and bull trout and would have "no effect" on Spalding's silene. This concurrence is contingent upon implementation of the proposed dredging and disposal activities as described in the biological assessment, in addition to the conservation measures described therein. However, as was pointed out by Scott Ackerman, of your staff, in an electronic letter to me on August 21, 2001, we neglected to concur with your findings on the 20-year dredging concept plan. The Service now concurs with the Corps' determinations that the 20-year dredging plan "may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect" bald eagles, Ute ladies'-tresses, and bull trout and would have "no effect" on Spalding's silene. Our concurrence is based on the following assumptions:

- Consultation for specific dredging and associated actions will occur over 5-year or shorter time periods, as discussed in the BA

- As discussed in the BA, the Corps will comply with the terms of the Service's Biological Opinion (BO) on the Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS) to monitor bull trout in the lower Snake River system
- The Corps will comply with the term of the Service's BO on the FCRPS to investigate the presence in, and use of, the main stem Lower Snake River by bull trout migrating from the Tucannon River
- The Corps will comply with the term of the Service's BO on the FCRPS to initiate studies to determine bull trout timing and usage of the Lower Snake River dam facilities
- The Corps will comply with the term of the Service's BO on the FCRPS to estimate annual population size of bull trout migrating to and from the Lower Snake River reservoirs, and develop abundance trends over time

Based on the findings from the above bull trout studies, other investigations on bull trout, other investigations on dredging effects on aquatic resources, or based on recommendations contained in the Bull Trout Recovery Plan, we may request reinitiation of section 7 consultation for the proposed project activities in the future. We would appreciate being made aware of findings from the above mentioned studies and investigations, as they relate to bull trout or other listed species.

This concludes informal consultation for species under the purview of the Service pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act). This project should be re-analyzed if new information reveals effects of the action that may affect listed species or critical habitat in a manner or to an extent not considered in this consultation; if the action is subsequently modified in a manner that causes an effect to the listed species or critical habitat that was not considered in this consultation; and/or, if a new species is listed or critical habitat is designated that may be affected by this project.

Should you have any additional questions regarding endangered species or your responsibilities under the Act, please contact me at (509) 754-8580.

Sincerely,

/Signed/

Supervisor

CC: NMFS, Lacey, (Joe Miller)  
USFWS, Spokane, (Susan Martin)